CLAIMS

1.   A method comprising:

installing a pre-installation environment on a target computer that is desired to be imaged with a new operating system;

re-booting the target computer in the pre-installation environment;

deleting an old operating system from within the pre-installation environment;

installing the new operating system from within the pre-installation environment; and

re-booting the target computer in the new operating system;

said acts being effective to in-place image the target computer with the new operating system.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the act of installing the pre-installation environment comprises installing the pre-installation environment in a same disk partition as the old operating system.

3.   The method of claim 1 further comprising capturing data and state for migration to the new operating system and migrating said captured data and state to the new operating system.

4.   The method of claim 1 further comprising capturing machine data for migration to the new operating system and migrating said captured machine data to the new operating system.

5.   The method of claim 1 further comprising capturing user data for migration to the new operating system and migrating said captured user data to the new operating system.

6.   The method of claim 1 further comprising capturing user state for migration to the new operating system and migrating said captured user state to the new operating system.

7.   The method of claim 1 further comprising capturing client data for migration to the new operating system and migrating said captured client data to the new operating system.

8.   One or more computer readable media having computer readable instructions thereon which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the method of claim 1.

9.   A set of application program interfaces (APIs) configured to perform the method of claim 1.

10. A system comprising:

one or more target computers each having one or more computer-readable media;

computer readable instructions on the one or more computer readable media which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform a method comprising:

capturing data for migration to a new operating system, said data comprising one or more of machine data, user data, and client data;

installing a pre-installation environment on a target computer that is desired to be imaged with a new operating system;

re-booting the target computer in the pre-installation environment;

deleting an old operating system from within the pre-installation environment;

installing the new operating system from within the pre-installation environment;

re-booting the target computer in the new operating system;

migrating said captured data to the new operating system;

said acts being effective to in-place image the target computer with the new operating system.

11. A method comprising:

using a multi-phase image deployment process to remotely image multiple target computers with a new operating system, said multi-phase deployment process comprising at least:

a preparation phase in which various data is captured for migration to the new operating system;

a wipe and load phase in which an old operating system is deleted and the new operating system is installed in place; and

a restoration phase in which captured data is migrated to the new operating system.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the preparation phase can capture data associated with one or more of machine state, client state, user state and/or user data.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein machine state data can comprise one or more of computer name, domain, and network settings.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein client state data can comprise Site association or code, client GUID, and an associated distribution point.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein user state data can comprise a user profile.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein user data can comprise folders and files desired for migration and network share settings.

17. The method of claim 11, wherein the preparation phase comprises installing a pre-installation environment from which in place installation can take place.

18. The method of claim 11, wherein the preparation phase comprises installing a pre-installation environment from which in place installation can take place, wherein the pre-installation environment comprises WinPE™.

19. The method of claim 11, wherein the wipe and load phase comprises enabling a target computer to connect with at least one of a number of destination points from which an image file containing the new operating system image is obtained.

20. The method of claim 11, wherein the multi-phase image deployment process is configured to generate status reports during each of the phases, said status reports being transmittable to a system administrator to facilitate management of the image deployment process.

21. The method of claim 11, wherein the multi-phase image deployment process is configured to generate status reports during each of the phases, said status reports being transmittable to a system administrator to facilitate management of the image deployment process, wherein status reports are generated by an old client associated with the old operating system, and a new client associated with the new operating system.

22. One or more computer readable media having computer readable instructions thereon which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the method of claim 11.

23. A set of application program interfaces (APIs) configured to perform the method of claim 11.

24. A system comprising:

one or more target computers each having one or more computer-readable media;

computer readable instructions on the one or more computer readable media which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform a method comprising:

using a multi-phase image deployment process to remotely image multiple target computers with a new operating system, said multi-phase deployment process comprising at least:

a preparation phase in which various data is captured for migration to the new operating system;

a wipe and load phase in which an old operating system is deleted and the new operating system is installed in place; and

a restoration phase in which captured data is migrated to the new operating system.

25. A method comprising:

notifying a target computer user that a new operating system image is desired to be deployed on the target computer; and

providing the user with an option to postpone image deployment on the target computer.

26. The method of claim 25 further comprising providing the user with an option to disallow image deployment on the target computer.

27. The method of claim 25 further comprising providing the user with an option to immediately begin an image deployment process on the target computer.

28. The method of claim 25 further comprising providing the user with an option to disallow image deployment process on the target computer, and an option to immediately begin an image deployment process on the target computer.

29. The method of claim 25, wherein the act of providing comprises allowing the user to specify a postponement duration.

30. One or more computer readable media having computer readable instructions thereon which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the method of claim 25.

31. A set of application program interfaces (APIs) configured to perform the method of claim 25.

32. A method comprising:

notifying a target computer user that a new operating system image is desired to be deployed on the target computer;

providing the user with an option to at least (1) disallow image deployment on the target computer, (2) immediately begin an image deployment process on the target computer, and (3) postpone image deployment on the target computer;

receiving user input that pertains to the desired image deployment; and

performing image deployment pursuant to the user's input.

33. One or more computer readable media having computer readable instructions thereon which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the method of claim 32.

34.   A set of application program interfaces (APIs) configured to perform the method of claim 32.

35.   A method comprising:

creating an operating system image that is to be deployed across a plurality of target machines, said image comprising at least one image file;

creating an image package that contains said one image file, at least a deployment environment, tools and configuration files for installing the image on said target machines; and

distributing the image package to one or more distribution points from which individual target machines can access the image package.

36.   The method of claim 35, wherein said deployment environment comprises WinPE™.

37.   The method of claim 35, wherein said one or more distribution points comprise one or more file shares.

38. The method of claim 35 further comprising generating an advertisement for the image package and sending the advertisement to one or more of the target machines, said advertisement being configured to advise target machine users that a new operating system is desired to be deployed on their machine.

39. One or more computer readable media having computer readable instructions thereon which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the method of claim 35.

40. A set of application program interfaces (APIs) configured to perform the method of claim 35.

41. A system comprising:

one or more computers each having one or more computer-readable media;

computer readable instructions on the one or more computer readable media which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform a method comprising:

creating an operating system image that is to be deployed across a plurality of target machines, said image comprising one or more image files;

creating an image package that contains said one or more image files and at least a deployment environment for installing the image on said target machines; and

distributing the image package to one or more distribution points from which individual target machines can access the image package.

42. A method comprising:

creating an operating system image that is to be deployed across a plurality of target machines, said image comprising one or more image files;

creating an image package that contains said one or more image files and at least a deployment environment for installing the image on said target machines;

distributing the image package to one or more distribution points from which individual target machines can access the image package;

notifying a target machine user that a new operating system image is desired to be deployed on the target machine; and

providing the user with an option to postpone image deployment on the target machine.

43. The method of claim 42 further comprising providing the user with an option to disallow image deployment on the target machine.

44. The method of claim 42 further comprising providing the user with an option to immediately begin an image deployment process on the target machine.

45. The method of claim 42 further comprising providing the user with an option to disallow image deployment process on the target machine, and an option to immediately begin an image deployment process on the target machine.

46. The method of claim 42, wherein the act of providing comprises allowing the user to specify a postponement duration.

47. One or more computer readable media having computer readable instructions thereon which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the method of claim 42.

48. A set of application program interfaces (APIs) configured to perform the method of claim 42.

49. A system comprising:

one or more computers each having one or more computer-readable media;

computer readable instructions on the one or more computer readable media which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform a method comprising:

creating an operating system image that is to be deployed across a plurality of target machines, said image comprising one or more image files;

creating an image package that contains said one or more image files and at least a deployment environment for installing the image on said target machines;

distributing the image package to one or more distribution points from which individual target machines can access the image package;

notifying a target machine user that a new operating system image is desired to be deployed on the target machine;

providing the user with options to postpone, disallow, and immediately begin image deployment on the target machine.

50.   A method comprising:

creating an operating system image of a new operating system that is to be deployed across a plurality of target machines, said image comprising one or more image files;

creating an image package that contains said one or more image files and at least a deployment environment for installing the image on said target machines;

distributing the image package to one or more distribution points from which individual target machines can access the image package;

installing the deployment environment on a target machine that is desired to be imaged with the new operating system;

re-booting the target machine in the deployment environment;

deleting an old operating system from within the deployment environment;

installing the new operating system from within the deployment environment; and

re-booting the target machine in the new operating system;

said acts being effective to in-place image the target machine with the new operating system.

51.   The method of claim 50 further comprising capturing data for migration to the new operating system and migrating said captured data to the new operating system.

52. The method of claim 50 further comprising capturing machine data for migration to the new operating system and migrating said captured machine data to the new operating system.

53. The method of claim 50 further comprising capturing user data for migration to the new operating system and migrating said captured user data to the new operating system.

54. The method of claim 50 further comprising capturing user state for migration to the new operating system and migrating said captured user state to the new operating system.

55. The method of claim 50 further comprising capturing client data for migration to the new operating system and migrating said captured client data to the new operating system.

56. One or more computer readable media having computer readable instructions thereon which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the method of claim 50.

57. A set of application program interfaces (APIs) configured to perform the method of claim 50.

58. A system comprising:

one or more computers each having one or more computer-readable media;

computer readable instructions on the one or more computer readable media which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform a method comprising:

creating an operating system image of a new operating system that is to be deployed across a plurality of target machines, said image comprising one or more image files;

creating an image package that contains said one or more image files and at least a deployment environment for installing the image on said target machines;

distributing the image package to one or more distribution points from which individual target machines can access the image package;

installing the deployment environment on a target machine that is desired to be imaged with the new operating system;

re-booting the target machine in the deployment environment;

deleting an old operating system from within the deployment environment;

installing the new operating system from within the deployment environment; and

re-booting the target machine in the new operating system;

said acts being effective to in-place image the target machine with the new operating system.

59. A method comprising:

creating an operating system image of a new operating system that is to be deployed across a plurality of target machines, said image comprising one or more image files;

creating an image package that contains said one or more image files and at least a deployment environment for installing the image on said target machines;

distributing the image package to one or more distribution points from which individual target machines can access the image package; and

using a multi-phase image deployment process to remotely image, from at least one distribution point, multiple target computers with the new operating system, said multi-phase deployment process comprising at least:

a preparation phase in which various data is captured for migration to the new operating system;

a wipe and load phase in which an old operating system is deleted and the new operating system is installed in place; and

a restoration phase in which captured data is migrated to the new operating system.

60. The method of claim 59, wherein the preparation phase comprises installing a pre-installation environment from which in place installation can take place.

61. The method of claim 59, wherein the wipe and load phase comprises enabling a target machine to connect with at least one of the distribution points to obtain the image package.

62. The method of claim 59, wherein the multi-phase image deployment process is configured to generate status reports during each of the phases, said status reports being transmittable to a system administrator to facilitate management of the image deployment process.

63. The method of claim 59, wherein the multi-phase image deployment process is configured to generate status reports during each of the phases, said status reports being transmittable to a system administrator to facilitate management of the image deployment process, wherein status reports are generated by an old client associated with the old operating system, and a new client associated with the new operating system.

64. One or more computer readable media having computer readable instructions thereon which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the method of claim 59.

65. A set of application program interfaces (APIs) configured to perform the method of claim 59.

66. A system comprising:

one or more computers each having one or more computer-readable media;

computer readable instructions on the one or more computer readable media which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform a method comprising:

creating an operating system image of a new operating system that is to be deployed across a plurality of target machines, said image comprising one or more image files;

creating an image package that contains said one or more image files and at least a deployment environment for installing the image on said target machines;

distributing the image package to one or more distribution points from which individual target machines can access the image package; and

using a multi-phase image deployment process to remotely image, from at least one distribution point, multiple target computers with the new operating system, said multi-phase deployment process comprising at least:

a preparation phase in which various data is captured for migration to the new operating system;

a wipe and load phase in which an old operating system is deleted and the new operating system is installed in place; and

a restoration phase in which captured data is migrated to the new operating system.

67. The system of claim 66, wherein the multi-phase image deployment process is configured to generate status reports during each of the phases, said status reports being transmittable to a system administrator to facilitate management of the image deployment process.

68. The system of claim 66, wherein the multi-phase image deployment process is configured to generate status reports during each of the phases, said status reports being transmittable to a system administrator to facilitate management of the image deployment process, wherein status reports are generated by an old client associated with the old operating system, and a new client associated with the new operating system.

69. A method comprising:

remotely deploying a new operating system on one or more target computers by sending image packages containing an image of the new operating system to one or more distribution points and staging deployment from the one or more distribution points through multiple phases comprising at least:

a preparation phase in which various data is captured for migration to the new operating system;

a wipe and load phase in which an old operating system is deleted and the new operating system is installed; and

a restoration phase in which captured data is migrated to the new operating system;

generating status reports within each of the phases, at least some of the status reports describing events that occur during an associated phase; and

transmitting the status reports to a system administrator.

70. The method of claim 69, wherein the wipe and load phase installs the new operating system in place.

71. The method of claim 69, wherein said act of transmitting the status reports is accomplished, at least in part, by an old client executing on an operating system that is replaced, and a new client executing on the new operating system.

72. The method of claim 69, wherein the preparation phase can capture data associated with one or more of machine state, client state, user state, and/or user data.

73. The method of claim 69, wherein the preparation phase comprises installing a pre-installation environment from which in place installation can take place.

74. One or more computer readable media having computer readable instructions thereon which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the method of claim 69.

75. A set of application program interfaces (APIs) configured to perform the method of claim 69.

76. A system comprising:

one or more computers each having one or more computer-readable media;

computer readable instructions on the one or more computer readable media which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform a method comprising:

remotely deploying a new operating system on one or more target computers by sending image packages containing an image of the new operating system to one or more distribution points and staging deployment from the one or more distribution points through multiple phases comprising at least:

a preparation phase in which various data is captured for migration to the new operating system;

a wipe and load phase in which an old operating system is deleted and the new operating system is installed; and

a restoration phase in which captured data is migrated to the new operating system;

generating status reports within each of the phases, at least some of the status reports describing events that occur during an associated phase; and

transmitting the status reports to a system administrator.